

IN MEMORIAM

Eulogy for Father Peter Scorer

On September 11, 2020, Father Peter Scorer, the longtime deacon and disciple of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, fell asleep in the Lord weeks after being diagnosed with advanced lung cancer.

Peter Scorer was born in England on October 15, 1942. On his mother's side he was a grandson of the great Russian religious philosopher Semyon Frank. Scorer's English father was killed in battle in 1943. Peter was baptized by Archimandrite Lev Gillet and raised in the Russian Orthodox Church. He graduated from Oxford, where he read Russian and French. He then went to study at St Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary under Fathers Alexander Schmemmann and John Meyendorff. He graduated in 1967 and moved back to England with his new wife Irina. In 1973, he was ordained a deacon by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, and served as his deacon until Vladyka's repose in 2003. Father Peter was ordained a priest on February 1, 2020, by Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain. Until his final illness, he served the parish of the Holy Prophet Elias in Exeter, Devonshire.

Father Peter was loved and admired by hundreds of people. The number of lives he touched around the world, especially in his native England and in Russia, is extraordinary. Everyone remembers his kindness, gentleness, generosity, and good cheer. Father Peter was one of those rare people who truly reflect the light of the king-



Photo: James Hyndman.

dom in their very persons, and he transmitted this light generously to the world. He had a gift for making people whom he had barely met feel like family. Russian poet and philosopher Olga Sedakova remembers:

We met for the first time in Moscow, at the still semi-secret house meetings with Vladyka Anthony. Petya at that time accompanied him as a deacon. When he looked at me and smiled, I began to look around for whomever it was that was so familiar and dear to him. It couldn't be me. I asked whether he had mistaken me for someone else. No, he said, you are Olya, I know.



Peter and Irina Scorer in 2017. Photo: Emma Gore-Lloyd.

This experience is echoed by countless others. Just as Saint Seraphim of Sarov used to greet people who came to visit him, including strangers, “My joy!” Father Peter seemed to radiate this same greeting with his whole person. Sedakova attributes Scorer’s gift to his seeing the entire world—“people, things, plants, animals”—as God’s world and delighting in it with gratitude and happiness.

Yet with this gentleness also came fortitude, nourished and inspired by his unwavering faith. In the words of Gillian Crow, a fellow parishioner of thirty seven years: “Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh used to say that the word ‘faith’ included faithfulness. Peter had both, in large measure. And in the many trials our deanery has endured since Metropolitan Anthony’s death, Peter has truly been a faithful rock—a *petros* for us all.” It was this fortitude that helped guide the deanery in its recent jurisdictional trials. And yet Father Peter managed to stay firm as a rock without fomenting division and animosity, always speak-

ing the truth in love—the gift many aspire to but few achieve.

It was this faithfulness and deep love for his Church that led to his ordination as a priest after serving for fifty years as a deacon. At the venerable age when most other clergymen step back and enjoy the peace of semi- or full retirement, Father Peter instead took on the care of his small parish in Exeter—and what care it turned out to be, with the swift onset of the Covid-19 pandemic! Father Peter continued to serve until his final illness, singing the services with his wife Irina for all to tune in. It was, like all his life, a prayer for the world.

Of course, no story of Father Peter’s life can leave out his selfless and devoted service to the memory of his great grandfather, philosopher Semyon Frank. His work on preserving Frank’s legacy cannot be overestimated. Professor Sister Teresa Obolovich remembers:

Father Peter used to say that he has three main life tasks: the legacy of



Pascha 2017. Photo:
Emma Gore-Lloyd.

Frank, the legacy of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh—he presided over the Metropolitan Spiritual Heritage Foundation—and his ministry at the Orthodox parish in Exeter. He was happy and proud to announce his ordination to the priesthood, which took place in early February of this year. As a gift, I sent him a copy of a letter from his grandmother Tatiana Frank to Fedor Stepun. In it, the widow of the philosopher wrote about her grandson: “Petya was sent off to America to Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, he graduated well from Oxford. His departure is also a huge challenge for me: he is quite an amazing boy, if he becomes a priest, he will give people a lot. The soul of Semyon Ludvigovich came back to life in him, the soul that lives by God and shines with him. He did not get his grandfather’s head, but he got his soul. I am happy with them!” These words perfectly express the essence of the life of Father Peter—a

priest and an unusually warm and bright man, whom all researchers of Frank’s thought perceived as a close relative.

The falling asleep of one who is so loved leaves, of course, a deep wound and a great hole in the fabric of our earthly lives. Yet with someone like Father Peter, one cannot help agreeing with his niece Boulia Ledkovsky: “If ever there were someone whom I felt sure would be welcomed to a place among the saints, it is our darling, extraordinary, sweet, loving, irreplaceable, irreplaceable Peter.”

The great words of Father Alexander Schmemmann, Father Peter’s teacher at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, stand as a fitting conclusion to this earthly life, and a beginning of life eternal: “If I make this new life mine, mine this hunger and thirst for the Kingdom, mine this expectation of Christ, mine the certitude that Christ is Life, then my very death will be an act of communion with Life.”



**Father Peter Scorer's First Sermon as
a Priest**

February 1, 2020

This is the first time that I have stood and offered a sacrifice to our God.

During the ordination Liturgy, the Bishop takes the Lamb, the consecrated Lamb, the Lamb that is the body of Christ, and he puts it in the hands of the newly ordained deacon—or rather the newly ordained priest. . . . [smiling] I'm still a deacon. He puts it in the hands of the newly ordained

priest, and the priest stands there, from the consecration up until the Lord's Prayer, holding the Lamb of God.

It is a little bit like Saint Simeon receiving Christ in his arms. I am an old man who has seen the Salvation. So, I have nothing more to say to you all, except to thank you, to thank all of you. And to ask that I might serve you, and that we might work together for the salvation not only of ourselves, but for the salvation of the world.

Thank you. ✱